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CHAUCER.

THE CLERK'S TALE

1867

Chaucer.

The Clerk's Tale.

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Chaucer.

The Clerk's Tale.

PROLOGUS.

Sire Clerk of Oxenford / oure host sayde
ȝe ride as stille and coy / as dooth̃ a mayde
Were newe spoused / syttynge at the bord
This day ne herd I / of ȝoure tonge a word
I trowe ȝe studye / a bouten som Sophyme
But Salamon seith̃ / þat eu*er*y thyng hath̃ tyme
For goddis sake / as beth̃ of betre cheere
It is no tyme / for to studyen heere
Telle vs som mery tale / be ȝoure feye
For what man / that is entred / in a pleye
He nedes must / vn to the pley assent
But preecheth̃ nat / as freres don in lent
To make vs / for oure olde synnes wepe
Ne that thy tale / make vs nat to slepe
Telle vs sum mery[1] thyng / of auentures
ȝoure termes / ȝoure coloures / and figures
Kepe hem in stoor / til so be / *þat*[2] ȝe endite

[1] *mery* added above the line. [2] *þt* added above.

Heye stile / as whan *þat* men / to kynges wryte
Spekith̄ so pleyn / at this tyme / we ȝow preye
That we moun vnderstonde / what that ȝe seye
¶ This worthy Clerk / benygnely answered
Host q*uo*d he / I am vnder ȝoure ȝerde
Ȝe han of vs / as now / the gou*er*naunce
And therfore wold I do ȝow / obeisaunce
As fer as resoñ axeth̄ / hardily
I wold ȝow telle a tale / which̄ that I
lerned at Padowe / of a worthy Clerk
As proued be his wordes / and his werk
he is now deed / and nayled in his cheste
I preye to god / so ȝeue his soule reste
Fraunceys Petrak / the laureat poete
hygh̄t this Clerk / whos Retoryk swete
Enlumyned al Itaille / of Poetrye
As lynyan dide / of Philosophye
Or lawe / or other art particuler
But deth̄ that wol nat / suffren vs / dwellen heer
But as it were / a twynkelynge of an eye
hem bothe hath̄ slayne / and alle shuln we deye
But forth̄ to tellen / of this worthy man
That taugh̄t me this tale / as I began
I seye / that first / he with̄ heye[1] stile enditeth̄
Or he the dety / of his tale wryteth̄
A p*ro*bleme / in the whiche / descryueth̄ he
Pemond and of Saluces / the contree
And spekith̄ of Appenym / the hilles heye
That ben the boundes / of westlumbardye
And of Mount vesulus / in speciale
Where as the Poo / out of a welle smalle
Taketh̄ his first spryngynge / and his sours[2]
That Estward ay / encresith̄ in his cours

[1] *his* corrected into *heye*. [2] *cours* corrected into *sours*.

To Emelie[1] ward / To fferaro and venyse
The whicħ a long thyng were / to deuyse
And trewely / as to my Iugement
Me thynketħ it a thyng / impartinent
55 Saue he wole conueyen / his matere
But this is the tale / whicħ þat ȝe mouñ heere

¶ Hic desinit prologus / et incipit fabula Clerici de Oxoñ :

There is right at the west side / of ytaille
Doun at the rote / of vesulus the colde
Grata planicies A lusty pleyn / habundaunt of vytaille
Where many a Touñ & Tour / þou mayst byholde
That founded were / in tyme of fadres olde
And many a nother / delitable sygħt
7 And Saluces / this noble contree hygħt

Inter cetera ad radicem vesuli terra Saluciarum vicis & Castellis.

¶ A Markys whylom / lord was of that londe
As were his worthy elderes / hi*m* byfore
And obeissañt / ay redy to his honde
Were alle hise lieges / bothe lesse and more
Thus in delyt he lyueth / and hath doon ȝore
Byloued and dred / thurgħ fauour of fortune
14 Bothe of his lordes / & of his Comune

¶ There witħ he was / to speken of lynage
The gentillest I borñ / of lumbardye
A fair p*er*sone and strong / and ȝong of age
And ful of honour / and curteysye
Discret I now / his contree for to gye
Saue in so*m*me thynges / he was to blame
21 And Walter[2] / was this ȝong lordes name

[1] *Emele* corrected into *Emelie*.
[2] Originally Wa*u*lter, but the 'u' is erased.

¶ I blame hi*m* thus / that he considered nought
In tyme comyng / what myght hi*m* betyde
But on his lust p*re*sent / was al his thought
As for to hauke and hunte / on eu*er*y syde
Wel ny / alle othere cures / leet he slide
And eke he nolde / and that was werst of alle
28 Wedde no wyf / for nought that myght byfalle

¶ Only that poynt / his peeple bar so sore
cateruatim That flokmele on a day / to hi*m* they went
And oon of hem / that wysest was of lore
Or elles / that the lord best / wolde assent
That he shulde telle hi*m* / what the peeple ment
Or elles coude he shewe wel / swich mateer
35 he to the Markys seyde / as ȝe shuln heere

tua inquid humanitas optime ¶ O noble Markys / ȝoure humanyte
Marchio: Assureth vs / and ȝeueth vs hardynesse
As ofte / as tyme is / of necessite
That we to ȝow mow telle / oure heuynesse
Accepteth lord / thanne of ȝoure gentilnesse
That if we / w*ith* pytous hert / vn to ȝow pleyne
42 And lete ȝoure Eeres / nat my voys desdeyne

¶ Al haue I nat to done / in this matere
More than a nother man / hath in this place
ȝet for as meche / as ȝe / my lord so deere
han alwey shewed me / fauour and grace
I dar the betre / aske of ȝow a space
Of audience / to shewen oure request
49 And ȝe my lord / to don right as ȝow list

¶ For certes lord / so wel vs lyketh ȝow
And alle ȝoure werke / and eu*er*e han don / that we

Ne coude nat / oure self / deuysen how
We myghten lyuen / in more felicite
Saue o thyng lord / if it ȝowre wylle be
That for to be / a wedded man / ȝow list
56 Than were ȝoure peeple / in souerayne hertis rest

¶ Boweth ȝoure nekke / vnder that blisseful ȝok
Of Souereyntee / nought of seruyse
Which that men clepen / spousaile or wedlak
And thynketh lord / a mong ȝoure thoughtes wyse
how that oure dayes / passe in sondry gyse
For though we slepe or wake / or rome or ryde
63 Ay fleeth the tyme / it wyl noman a byde

¶ And though ȝoure grene ȝouthe / floure as ȝet
In crepeth age alwey / as stille as ston
And deth manaceth euere age / and smyt
In ech estate / for there eskapeth noon.
And also certeyn / as we knowen echon
That we shuln deye / and vncerteyne we alle
70 Ben of that day / whan deth shal on vs falle

¶ Acceptetth thanne of vs / the trewe entent
That neuere ȝet / refuseden ȝoure heeste
And we wyln lord / if that ȝe wyln assent
Chese ȝow a wyf / in short tyme at the leste
Born of the gentillest / and of the meste
Of al this lond / so that it ought seme
77 honour to god and ȝow / as we can deme

¶ Delyuere vs out / of al this besi drede
And take a wyf / for heye goddis sake
For if it so byfel / as god for bede
That thurgh ȝoure deth / ȝoure lynage shuld slake

And that a straunge successour / shuld take
ȝoure heritage / O woo were vs on lyue
84 Wherfore we preye ȝow / hastily to wyue

¶ here meke preyere / and here pytous chere
Made the Markys hert / hane pytee
ȝe wyln q*uo*d he / myn owen peeple deere
To that I neu*er*e erst thought / streyne me
I me reioysed / of my liberte
That selde tyme / is founde in mariage
91 Ther I was free / I must ben in seruage

¶ But nathelees / I see ȝoure trewe entent
And troste vp on ȝoure wyt / and haue don ay
Wherfore of my free wyl / I wol assent
To wedde me / as sone as eu*er*e I may
But there as ȝe han / p*ro*fred me to day
To chese me a wyf / I ȝow relesse
98 That choys / and prey ȝow / of that p*ro*fre cese

¶ For god it wot / that children often been
Vnlyke / here worthy elders / hem byfore
Bounte cometh al of god / nat of the streen
Of which / they ben I gendred / and I bore
I troste in goddis bounte / and therfore
My mariage / and myn estat and reste
105 I hym bytake / he may do as hi*m* leste

¶ lat me a lone / in chesyng of my wyf
That charge vp on my bak / I wol endure
But I ȝow preye and charge / vp on ȝoure lyf
That what wyf that I take / ȝe me assure
To worshipe hire / whyle that hire lyf may dure
In word and werk / bothe heere and eu*er*ywhere
112 As she an Emp*er*oures doughter / were

¶ And forthermore / this shuln ȝe swere / that ȝe
A geyn my choys / shuln neu*ere* grucche ne stryue
For syn I shal for go / my libertee
At ȝoure request / as eu*ere* mot I thryue
There as myn hert is sette / there wol I wyue
And but ȝe wyln assent / in swich̃ manere
119 I preye ȝow / speketh̃ nomore / of this matere

¶ With̃ hertly wyl / they sworñ and assenten
To al this thyng / there seide no wygh̃t nay
Bysekyng hi*m* of grace / or þ*a*t they wenten
That he wolde graunte he*m* / a certeyn day
Of his spousaille / as sone as eu*ere* he may
For ȝet alwey / the peeple sumwhat dredde[1]
126 lest that the Markys / no wyf wold wedde

¶ he gr*a*unted hem a day / swich̃ as hi*m* list
On which̃ he wolde / be wedded sekerly
And seide / he dide al this / at here request
And they with̃ humble entent / ful buxumly
Knelyng vp oon here knees / ful reuerently
him thanken alle / and thus they han an ende
133 Of here entent / and hom a geyn they wende

¶ And heere vp on / he vn to hise officers
Comaundeth̃ / for the feest to purueye
And to his pryue knigh̃tis / and Squyers
Swich̃ charge ȝaf / as hi*m* list on he*m* leye
And they / to his comaundement / obeye
And ech̃ of hem dooth̃ / al his diligence
140 To don vn to the feest / reuerence ¶ Prima pars

¶ Incipit p*ar*s Secunda Nough̃t fer / fro thilke paleys / honurable
Where as the Markys / shop̄ his mariage ¶ Mult haut procul a palacio &c.

[1] *drede* in MS. corrected into *dredde*.

There stod a Thrope / of syght delitable
In whicħ / that poore folk / of that village
hadden here beestes / and here herbergage
And of here labour / token here sustenaunce
147 After that the erthe / ȝaf he*m* habundaunce

¶ A monges theise poore folk / there dwelt a man
Whicħ that was holden / poorest of hem alle
But heye god / somtyme sende can
his grace / in to a litel Oxes stalle
Ianycola / men of that Throꝑ hi*m* calle
A dougħter had he / fair I now to sigħt
154 And Grysildes / this ȝonge mayden higħt

¶ But for to speke / of vertuous beaute
Than was she oon / of the fayrest vnder Sonne
fful poorely / I fostred vp / was she
No lykerous lust / was in hire hert I ronne
Wel oftere of the welle / than of the Tonne
She dranke / and for she wolde vertu plese
161 She knew wel labour / but noon Idel eese

¶ But thoughħ this Mayde / tendre were of age
ȝet in the breest / of hire virgynytee
There was enclosed / ripe and sad corage
And in gret reuerence / and charitee
hire olde poore fader / fostred she
A fewe shepe / spynnyng on the feld / she kepte
168 She wolde nought / ben Idel / til she slepte

¶ And whan she homward cam / she wolde brynge
Wortes / or other Erbes / tymes ofte
The whicħ she shredde / and setħ for here lyuynge
And mad hire bed ful hard / and no thyng softe

And ay she kepte / hire fadres lyf on lofte
with eu*ery* obeisaunce / and diligence
175 That child may don / to fadres reuerence

¶ vp on Grisilde / this poore creature
fful often sithes / this Markys sette his eye
As he on huntyng rod / p*er*auenture
And whan it fel / that he myght hire a spye
he nought / with wantoun lokyng / of folye
his eyen cast on hire / but in sad wyse
182 vp on hir chere / he wold hi*m* oft avyse

¶ Commendynge in his hert / hire wommanhede
And eke hire vertue / passyng any wyght
Of so ȝonge age / as wel in cheer as dede
ffor though the peeple / haue no gret insyght
In vertue / he considered ful right
hire bounte / and disposed that he wolde
189 wedde hire oonly / if eu*ere* he wedde shulde

¶ The day of weddynge cam / but no wyght can
Telle what womman / that it shulde be
ffor which meruayle / wondreth many a man
And seyden / whan they weren / in preuyte
wyl nat oure lord / ȝet leuen his vanyte
wyl he nat wedde / allas allas the whyle
196 why wyl he thus / hym self / and vs begyle

¶ But nathelees this Markys / hath don make
Of gemmes / sette in gold / and in Asure
Broches and rynges / for Grisildes sake
And of hire clothynge / toke he the mesure
Of a mayden / lyke / vn to hire stature

And eke of othere / ornamentis alle
203 That vn to swich̄ a weddynge / shulde falle

¶ The tyme of vnderne / of the Same day
Approcheth̄ / that this weddynge / shulde be
And al the paleys / put was in a ray
Bothe halle and chaumbres / eche in his degree
houses of office / stuffed with̄ plentee
There maist þou se / of deynteuous vetaille
210 That may be founde / as fer as lasteth̄ ytaille

¶ This ryal Markys / richely arayed
lordes and ladyes / in his companye
The which̄ / vn to the feest / were I preyed
And of his retenue / the bachelerye
With̄ many a Soun / of sondry melodye
vn to the village / of the which̄ I tolde
217 In this array / the right weye they holde

¶ Grisilde of this / god wot ful Innocent
That for hire shapen was / al this array
To fecchen water / at a welle is went
And cometh̄ hom / as sone as euere she may
For wel she had herd sey / that thilke day
The Markys shuld wedde / and if she myght
224 She wolde fayn han sen / som of that sight

¶ She thought I wyl with̄ othere Maydenes stonde
That ben myne felawes / in oure dore and se
The Markysesse / and therfore wol I fonde
To do at hom / as sone as it may be
The labour / which̄ that longeth̄ vn to me
And thanne I may / at leyser hire byholde
231 If she this weye / vn to the Castel holde

¶ Vt expeditis curis aliis ad videndum domini sui sponsam cum puellis comitibus prepararet.

¶ And as she wolde / ouer the threswold gon
The Markys cam / and gan hire for to calle
And she sette doun / hire watir pot a noon
Beside the threswold / in an oxes stalle
And doun vp on hire knees / she gan to falle
And with sad countenaunce / knelith stille
238 Til she had herd / what was the lordis wylle

¶ This thoughtful Markys / spak vn to this mayde
fful soberly / and seide in this manere
Where is ȝoure fader / Grisildis he seyde
And she with reuerence / in humble cheere
Answered lord / he is al redy heere
And In she goth / with outen lengere lette
245 And to the Markys / she hire fader fette

¶ he by the hond / than toke this poore man
And seide thus / whan he him had a syde
Ianycula / I neyther may ne can
lengere the plesaunce / of myn hert hyde
If that thow vouchesaf / what so betyde
Thy doughter wol I take / er that I wende
252 As for my wyf / vn to hire lyues ende

¶ Thow louest me / that wot I wel certeyn
And art my feithful leige man / I bore
And al that lyketh me / I dar wel seyn
It lyketh the / and specially therfore
Telle me that poynt / that I haue seid byfore
If that thow wylt / vn to that purpos drawe
259 To take me / as for thyn sone in lawe

¶ This sodeyn caas / the man a stoyned so
That red he wex a baist / and al quakynge

quum [1] Walterus cogitabundus incedens eamque compellans nomine.

[1] *quam* in MS.

he stod / vnethe seide he wordes moo
But oonly thus / lord q*uo*d he my wyllynge
Is as ȝe wole / ne a ȝeyns ȝoure likynge
I wyl no thyng / myn owen lord so deere
266 Rygħt as ȝow lyst / gouernetħ this matere

¶ ȝet wol I / q*uo*d this Markys softly
That in thy chaumbre / I and thow and she
haue a colacione / and wost thow why
ffor I wol aske / if it hire wyl be
To be my wyf / and reule hire after me
And al this shal be don / in thy p*re*sence
273 I wol nat speke / out of thyn audyence

¶ And in the Chaumbre / while they were a boute
ħere tretee / whicħ as ȝe shuln after heere
The peeple cam / in to the hous witħ oute
And wondred hem / in how honest manere
Ententifly / she kept hire fader dere
But vtterly / Grisildis wondir mygħt
280 ffor neu*e*re erst / ne saw she / swicħ a sigħt

¶ No wonder is / thougħ that she were a stoned
To se so gret a gest / come in to that place
She neu*e*re was / to swicħ gestes woned
ffor whicħ she loked / witħ ful pale face
But shortly / fortħ / this matere for to chace
Theise arñ the wordes / that the Markys seyde
287 To this benygne / verray feitħful Mayde

Et insolito tanti hospit*is* aduentu stupidam inuenit:

¶ Grisilde he seide / ȝe shuln wel vnderstonde
It lyketħ to ȝoure fader / and to me
That I ȝow wedde / and eke it may so stonde
As I suppose / ȝe wol that it so be

¶ Et patri tuo placet inquid & mi*h*i vt vxor mea sis / & credo idipsum tibi placeat set habeo ex te querere &c':

But this demaunde / aske I first q*uo*d he
That syn it shal be don / in hasty wyse
294 Wol ȝe assent / or ellis ȝow a vyse

¶ I seye this / be ȝe redy wit̄h good hert
To al my lust / and that I freely may
As me best thynket̄h / do ȝow laugh̄e or smert
¶ Nota bene And neu*ere* ȝe to[1] grucche it / nygh̄t ne day
And eke whan I sey ȝa / ȝe sey nat nay
Neither be word / ne frounyng countenaunce
301 Swere this / and heere I swere oure alliaunce

¶ Sine vlla frontis aut verbi inpugnacione:

¶ Wondrynge vp on this thyng / quakyng for drede
She seyde / lord / vn digne and vnworthy
Am I / to thilke honour / that ȝe me bede
But as ȝe wol ȝoure self / righ̄t so wol I
And heere I swere / that neu*ere* wyllyngly
In werk ne though̄t / I nyl ȝow disobeye
308 ffor to be deed / though̄h me were loth̄ to deye

Nil ego vnquam sciens ne dum faciam set eciam cogitabo quod contra animum tuum sit / nec tu aliquid facies & si me mori iusseris quod moleste feram.

¶ This is I now / Grisilde myn q*uo*d he
And forth̄ he gooth̄ / with a ful sobre cheer
Out at the dore / and after that cam she
And to the peeple he seide / in this manere
This is my wyf q*uo*d he / that stondeth̄ heere
Honoureth̄ hire / and loueth̄ hire I preye
315 Who so me loueth̄ / there is nomore to seye

¶ And for that no thyng / of hire olde gere
She shulde brynge / in to his hous / he bad
That wommen shulde / dispoylen hire righ̄t there
Of which̄ theise ladyes / weren no thyng glad
To handle hire clothes / where Inne she was clad

De hinc ne quid reliquiarum fortune veteris nouam inferat / in domum nudari eam iussit:

[1] *to* inserted above the line.

But nathelees / this mayden bright of hewe
322 ffro foot to hede / they clothed han al newe

¶ hire heres they kemed / that leyn vntressed
fful rudely / and with here fyngeris smale
A corone on hire hede / they han I dressed
And sette hire ful / of Ouches gret & smale
Of hire array / what shulde I make a tale
vnethe the peeple hire knew / for hire fairnesse
329 Whan she transmeeuyd was / in swich richesse

¶ This Markys / hath hire spoused / with a rynge
Brought for the same cause / and thanne hire sette
vp on an hors / Snow whyte / & wel aumblynge
And to his Paleys / er he lengere lette
With ioyeful peeple / that hire lad and mette
Conveyed hire / and thus the day they spende
336 In reuel / tyl the Sonne gan descende

¶ And shortly forth / this mater for to chace
I seye / that to this newe / Markysesse
God hath swich fauour sent hire / of his grace
That it ne semed nought / by lyknesse
That she was born and fed / in rudenesse
As in a Cote / or in an Oxes stalle
343 But norisshed / in an Emperoures halle

¶ To euery wyght / she wexen is so deere
And worshipful / that folk there she was bore
And from hire birthe / knewen hire ȝere by ȝere
vnethe trowed they / but durst han swore
That to Ianicle / of which I spak byfore
She doughter were / for as by coniecture
350 hem thought she was / a nother creature

Atque apud omnes supra fidem cara est / vix quod hijs ipsis qui illius originem nouerant persuaderi posset Ianicule natam esse tantus vite tantus morum decor ea verborum grauitas atque dulcedo quibus omnium animos nexu sibi magni amoris astrinxerat :

¶ ffor thoughh that eu*ere* / vertuous was she
She was encresed / in swich excellence
Of thewes goode / I sett in hey bounte
And so discreet / and fair of eloquence
So benygne / and so digne of reuerence
And coude so / the peeples her*tes* embrace
357 That ech hire louethh / that loked in hire face

¶ Nat oonly of Saluces / in the toun
Publisshed was / the bounte of hire name
But eke beside / in many a Regioñ
If on seith wel / a nother seith the same
So spredethh / of hire heye bounte / the fame
That men & wommen / as wel ȝonge as olde
364 Gon to Saluces / vp on hire to byholde

¶ Thus Walter lowely / nay but really
Wedded / withh fortunat honestete
In goddis pees / lyuethh ful esily
At hom / and grace I now outward had he
And for he saw / that vnder lowe degree
Was often vertue hid / the peeple hi*m* helde
371 A prudent man / and that is sen ful selde

Sic Walter*us* humili quidem set insigni ac *prospero* matrimonio honestat*us*[1] summa dei in pace & c' :

Quodq*ue* eximiam virtut*em* tanta sub inopia latitant*em* tam *perspicaciter* deprendisset vulgo[2] prudentissim*us* habebatur :

¶ Nat oonly this Grisildis / thurghh hire wytte
Coude al the feet / of wyfly humblenesse
But eke whan that the cass / requered ytte
The comune p*rofyt* / coude she redresse
There nas discord / rancour ne heuynesse
In al that lond / that she ne coude appese
378 And wysely brynge hem alle / in reste and ease

Neq*ue* *vero* soler*s* sponsa muliebria *tantum* ac domestica set vbi res poscer*et* publica eciam subibat officia :

¶ Thoughh that hire husbonde / absent were or noon
If gentil men / or othere of the contree

viro absente lites patrie nobilium discordias dirimens atq*ue* componens tam

[1] *honestatis* in MS. [2] *vulgus* in MS.

Weren wrothe / she wolde brynge hem at oon
So wyse / and ripe wordes / had she
And Iuggementȝ / of so grete equyte
That she from heuene / sent was / as men wende
385 Peeple to saue / and eu*er*y wrong to amende

grauibus responsis tantaq*ue* maturitate & iudicii equitate vt omnes ad salutem publicam demissam celo feminam predicarent:

¶ Nought longe tyme after / that this Grisilde
Was wedded / she a doughter hath I bore
Al had hire leuere / han born a knaue childe
Glad was this Markys / and his folk therfore
ffor though a mayden child / come al byfore
She may vn to a knaue child / atteyne
392 Be lyklihede / syn she nys nat bareyne

Incipit p*ar*s t*er*cia

¶ There fel / as it byfalleth tymes moo
Whan that this child / hath souked but a throwe
This Markys in his hert / longeth so
To tempte his wyf / hire sadnesse for to knowe
That he ne myght / out of his hert throwe
This m*er*ueillous desir / his wyf to assaye
399 Nathelees god wot / he thought hire for to affraye

Secunda pars

Cepit[1] ut fit int*er*dum Walterum cum iam ablactata esset infantula mirabilis quedam quam laudabilis cupiditas sat*is* exp*er*tam[2] care fidem coniugis exp*er*iendi alcius & it*er*um atq*ue* it*er*um retemptandi:—

¶ he had assayed hire / I now byfore
And fond hire eu*er*e good / what nedeth it
hire for to tempte / and alwey more and more
But as for me I seye / that euyl it sitte
Though su*m*me men preyse it / for a sotil wyt
To assaye a wyf / whan that it is no nede
406 And putten hire / in angwyssh and in drede

¶ ffor which this Markys / wrought in this manere
he cam a nyght a lone / there as she lay
With sterne face / and with ful trouble cheere

[1] Written by mistake *ceperit*.
[2] *apertam* corrected to *expertam*.

And seide thus / Grisilde q*uo*d he / that day
That I ȝow toke / out of ȝoure poore array
And putte ȝow in estat / of heigh̃ noblesse
413 ȝe han it nat forgeten / as I gesse

¶ I seye Grisilde / this present dignitee
In which̃ that I haue put ȝow / as I trowe
Maketh̃ ȝow nat / forgeteful for to be
That I ȝow toke / in poore estat / ful lowe
For any wele / ȝe mot ȝoure seluen knowe
Take hede / of eu*er*y word / that I ȝow seye
420 There nys no wygh̃t / that herith̃ it but we tweye

¶ ȝe wot ȝoure self wel / how that ȝe cam heere
In to this hous / it is nat longe a goo
And though̃ to me / that ȝe be leef and deere
Vn to my gentiles / ȝe be no thyng soo
They seyn to hem / it is gret shame and woo
For to be suggettes / and ben in seruage
427 To the / that born art / of a smal lynage

¶ And namely / sithe thy dough̃ter was I bore
Theise wordes han they spoken / doutelees
But I desire / as I haue don byfore
To lyue my lif with̃ hem / in reste and pees
I may nat in this caas / be rechelees
I mot don with̃ thy dough̃ter / for the beste
434 Nat as I wolde / but as myne gentiles liste

¶ And ȝet god wot / this is ful loth̃ to me
But nathelees / with̃ outen ȝoure wetynge
I wyl nat don / but this wol I q*uo*d he
That ȝe to me assenten / as in this thynge
Shewe now ȝoure pacience / in ȝoure werkynge

That ȝe me hight / and swor in ȝoure village
441 That day that maked was / oure mariage

¶ Whan she had herd al this / she nought a meeued
Neither in word / chere ne countenaunce Nec verbo mota nec vultu
For as it semed / she was nought a greued
She seide lord / al lith in ȝoure plesaunce
My child and I / with hertly obeysaunce
Ben ȝoures alle / and ȝe moun saue or spille
448 Ȝoure owen thyng / werketh after ȝoure wylle

¶ There may no thyng / so god my soule saue
lykyng to ȝow / that may displese me
Ne I desire / no thyng for to haue
Ne drede for to lese / saue oonly ȝe
This wyl is in myn hert / and ay shal be
No lengthe of tyme / or deth / may this deface
455 Ne chaunge my corage / to a nother place

¶ Glad was this Markys / of hire answerynge
But ȝet he feyned / as he were nat so
Al drery was his chere / and his lokynge
Whan that he shulde / out of the chaumbre goo
Sone after this / a furlonge weye or twoo
he preuyly hath told / al his entente
462 Vn to a man / and to his wyf hi*m* sente

¶ A maner of a Sergeaunt / was this pryue man
The which he feithful / often founden had
In thynges greete / and eke swich folk wel can
Don execucion / on thynges badde
The lord knew wel / that he hi*m* loued and dradde
And whan this sergeau*n*t / knew his lordes wylle
469 In to the chaumbre / he stalketh hi*m* ful stille

¶ Madame he seide / ȝe mot for ȝeue it me
Though I do thyng / to which I am constreyned
ȝe ben so wys / that right wel knowen ȝe
That lordes hestes / moun nat ben feyned
They moun wel ben beweilled / or compleyned
But men must nedes / to here lust obeye
476 And so wol I / there nys nomore to seye

¶ This child am I / comaunded for to take
And spak nomore / but out the child he hent
Dispetously / and gan a cher make
As though he wolde / han slayn it / or he went
Grisildis mot al suffre / and al consent
And as a lomb / she sitteth meke and stille
483 And leet this cruel Sergeaunt / don his wille

¶ Suspecious was the diffame / of this man
Suspect his face / suspect his word also
Suspect the tyme / in which he this bygan
Allas hire doughter / that she loued so
She wende he wolde / han slayn it right thoo
But natheless / she neither wep ne Syked
490 Conformynge hire / to that the Markys lyked

Suspecta viri fama / Suspecta facies
Suspecta hora/ Suspecta erat oracio :

¶ But at the laste / to speken she bygan
And mekely she / to the Sergeaunt preyede
So as he was / a worthy gentil man
That she must kysse hire child / er that it deyede
And in hire arm / this litel child she leyde
With ful sad face / and gan the child to blisse
497 And lulled it / and after gan it kysse

¶ And thus she seide / in hire benygne vois
Fare wel my child / I shal the neuere se

But sithe I haue the marked / with̄ the crois
Of thilke fader / I blissed mot thow be
That for vs deyed / vp on a cros of tree
Thy soule litel child / I hi*m* betake
504 For this nygh̄t / shalt þou dyen for my sake

¶ I trowe that to a Norice / in this caas
It had ben hard / this reuthe for to se
Wel mygh̄t a moder thanne / han cried allas
But nathelees / so sad and stedefast was she
That she endured / al aduersitee
And to the Sergeau*n*t / mekely she seyde
511 haue heere a geyn / ȝoure litel ȝong mayde

¶ Goth̄ now q*uo*d she / and doth̄ my [1] lordes heste
But o thyng wold I preye ȝow / of ȝoure grace
That but my lord / forbad ȝow at the leste
Berieth̄ this litel body / in sum place
That beestes ne no briddes / it to race
But he no word / wolde to the purpos seye
518 But toke the child / and went vp on his weye

This Sergeau*n*t cam / vn to his lord a geyn
And of Grisildis wordes / and of hire chere
he told hi*m* poynt for poynt / in short and pleyn
And hi*m* presenteth̄ / with̄ his dough̄ter dere
Sumwhat this lord / hath̄ reuthe in his manere
But nathelees / his purpos held he stille
525 As lordes don / whan they wyln han here wille

¶ And bad this Sergeau*n*t / that he preuyly
Shulde this child ful softe / wynde and wrappe
With̄ alle the circumstaunceȝ / tenderly

[1] *my my* MS.

And carie it in a coffre / or in a lappe
But vp on peyne / his hede of for to swappe
That noman shulde knowe / of this entent
532 Ne whens he cam / ne whider that he went

¶ But at Boloigne / to his Suster deere
That thilke tyme / of Pauyk was Contesse
he shuld it take / and shewe hire this matere
Bysekyng hire / to don hire besynesse
This child to fostren / in al gentilnesse
And whos child that it was / he bad hire hyde
539 From eu*er*y wyght / for ought that may betide

¶ The Sergeau*n*t goth / and hath fulfilled this thyng
But to the Markys / now retourne we
For now goth he / ful fast ymaginyng
If by his wyues chere / he myght se
Or by hire word / a p*er*ceyue that she
Were chaunged / but he neu*er*e coude hire fynde
546 But eu*er*e in oon / I lyke / sad and kynde

¶ As glad as humble / as bysy in seruyce
And eke in loue / as she was wont to be
Was she to hi*m* / in eu*er*y maner wyse
Ne of hire doughter / nought a word spak she
Noon accident / for noon adu*er*site
Was seen in hire / ne neu*er*e hire doughter name
553 Ne nempned she / in ernest ne in game

par alacritas atque sedulitas solitum obsequium idem amor nulla filie mencio:

Transiuerant hoc in statu anni. 4. dum ecce grauida &c'.

¶ In this estate / there passed ben foure ȝere
Er she w*ith* childe was / but as god wolde
A knaue child she bar / be this wautere
fful g*r*acious / and fair for to beholde

¶ Tercia p*ar*s desinit /
Et Incipit p*ar*s. 4ta.

And whan that folk / it to his fader tolde
Nat oonly he / but al his contree merye
560 Was for this child / and god they thanke & herye

¶ Whan it was two ȝer olde / and fro the breste
Dep*ar*tid of his norice / vp on a day
This Markys caught ȝet / a nother lyste
To tempte his wyf / ȝet oftere if he may
O nedlees / was she tempted in assay
¶ Nota But wedded men / ne knowe no mesure
567 Whan that they fynde / a pacient creature

¶ Wyf q*uo*d this Markys / ȝe han herd or this — Et olim ait audisti populum meum
My peeple sekerly / beren oure mariage — egre nostrum ferre connubium &c'
And namely / sithen my sone / I born is
Now is it werse / than eu*er*e in al oure age
The murmur sleeth myn herte / & myn corage
For to myn Eres / cometh the voys so smerte
574 That it wol ny / destroyed hath myn herte

¶ Now sey they thus / whan wauter is a goon
Than shal the blode / of Ianicle succede
And be oure lord / for other han we noon
Swich wordes seyn my peeple / it is no drede
Wel ought I / of swich murmur / take hede
For certeynly / I drede / swich sentence
581 Though they nouȝt pleyne & speke / in myn audience

¶ I wolde lyue in pees / if that I mygh̃t
Wherfore / I am disposed / vtterly
As I his Suster / serued be nygh̃t
Righ̃t so thynke I / to serue hi*m* preuyly
This warne I ȝow / for ȝe nat sodeynly
Out of ȝoure selue / for no woo shulde outraye
588 Beth pacient / and ther of I ȝow preye

¶ I haue q*uo*d she / seid thus / and eu*er*e shal
I wol no thyng / ne nyl no thyng certeyn
But as ȝow list / nought greuethꝫ me at al
Thoughꝫ that my doughter / & my sone be slayn
At ȝoure comaundement / that is to sayn[1]
I haue nought had no part / of children tweyne
595 But first sykenesse / and after woo and peyne

¶ Ȝe be my lord / dothꝫ withꝫ ȝoure owyn thynge
Right as ȝow list / asketh no reed of me
For as I left at home / al my clothynge
Whan I first cam to ȝow / right so q*uo*d she
Lefte I my wylle / and my liberte
And toke ȝoure clothynge / wherfore I ȝow preye
602 Dothꝫ ȝoure plesaunce / I wol ȝoure lust obeye

¶ And certes if I had had / prescience — Fac senciam tibi placere
ȝoure wyl to knowe / or ȝe ȝoure lust me tolde — quod moriar volens moriar
I wold it don / withꝫ outen negligence
But now I wot ȝoure lust / and what ȝe wolde
Al ȝoure plesaunce / ferme and stable I holde
For wyst I / that my dethꝫ / myght do ȝow eese
609 Right gladly wold I deye / ȝow to please

¶ Dethꝫ may nat make / no comparisone
Vn to ȝoure loue / and whan this Markys say
The constaunce of his wyf / he cast a doune
hise eyen two / and wondrethꝫ that she may
In pacience suffre / al this array
And forthꝫ he gothꝫ / withꝫ drery countenaunce
616 But to his herte / it was right gret plesaunce

¶ This vgly Sergeau*n*t / in the same wyse
That he hire daughter caught / right so he

[1] *slayn* in MS.

Or werse / if men can werse deuyse
hath hent hir sone / that ful was of beaute
And eu*ere* in oone / so pacient was she
That she no chere made / of heuynesse
623 But kyst hire sone / and after gan hi*m* blisse

¶ Saue this she preyed hi*m* / if that he myght
hire lytel Sone / he wolde in erthe graue
hise tendre lymes / delicat to sight
ffro foules and fro bestes / for to saue
But she noon answere / of hi*m* myght haue
He went his wey / as hi*m* no thyng ne rought
630 But to Boloigne / he it tenderly brought

¶ This Markys wondreth / eu*ere* lengere the more
Vp on hire pacience / and if that he
Ne had sothly / knowen ther byfore
That parfytly / hire children loued she
he wolde han wende / that of som sotiltee
And of malice / or for cruel corage
637 That she had suffred this / with sad visage

¶ But wel he knew / that next hi*m* self certeyn
She loued hire children best / in eu*er*y wyse
But now of wommen / wold I asken fayn
If theise assayes / myght nat suffise
What coude a sturdy husbonde / more deuyse
To preue hire wyfhode / and hire stedfastnesse
644 And he contynuynge / eu*ere* in sturdynesse

¶ But there be folk of swich condicion
That whan they han / a certeyn purpos take
They conne nat stynt / of here entencion
But right as they were bounden / vn to a stake

They wyl nat / of that first purpos slake
Right so this Markys / fullich hath purposed
651 To tempte his wyf / as he was first disposed

¶ he waytethh / if by word / or countenaunce
That she to hi*m* / was chaunged of corage
But neu*er*e coude he fynde / variaunce
She was ay oon / in hert and in visage
And ay the ferthere / that she was in age
The more trewe / if that it were possible
658 She was to hi*m* / in loue / and more penyble

¶ For which it semed thus / that of hem two
There nas but oo wyl / for as Walter lest
The same lust / was hire pleasaunce also
And god by thanked / as fel for the best
She shewed wel / for no worldly vnrest
A wyf as of hire self / no thyng ne shulde
665 Wylh in effect / but as hire husbonde wolde

¶ The sclaunder of Wautere / ofte and wyde sprad
That of cruel herte / he wykkedly
For he / a pore womman / wedded had
hath mordred / bothe hise children preuyly
Swich murmur / was a mong he*m* comounly
No wonder is / for to the peeples Ere
672 There cam no word / but that they mordred were

¶ For which / there as his peeple ther byfore
had loued hi*m* wel / the sclaunder of his defame
Mad hem / that they hi*m* hated therfore
To ben a mortherere / is an hateful name
But nathelees / for ernest or for game
he of his cruel purpos / nold he stynt
679 To tempte his wyf / was sette al his entent

Ceperat sensim [1] de Waltero
decolor fama crebrescere [2] :—

[1] MS. *ceperit senum*
[2] MS. *crebescere*

¶ Whan that his doughter / twelue ȝer was of age
he to the courte of Rome / in subtyl wyse
Enformed of his wyl / sent his message
Comaundyng hem / swich bulles to deuyse
As to his cruel purpos / may suffise
how that the Pope / as for his peeples reest
686 Bad hi*m* to wedde / a nother if hi*m* list

¶ I sey he bad / they shulde countrefete
The Popes bulles / makyng mencion
That he hath leue / his first wyf to lete
As by the Popes / dispensacion
To stynte rancour / and discencion
Be twix his peeple & hi*m* / thus seide the bulle
693 The which they han / publisshed at the fulle

¶ The [1] rude peeple / as [2] it no wondir is
Wende ful wele / that it had ben right so
But whanne theise tidynggis / comen to Grisildis
I deme / that hire herte / was ful woo
But she e lyke sad / for eu*er*e moo
Disposid was / this humble creature
700 The adu*er*site of fortune / al to endure

¶ A bidyng eu*er*e his lust / and his plesaunce
To whom that she was ȝeuen / hert and al
As to hire verray worldly / suffisaunce
But shortly / if I this story / tellen shal
This Markys / wryten hath in special
A l*ett*re / in which he sheweth / his entent
707 And secretly / he to Boloigne / it sent

[1] *Te* in MS., corrected in later hand.
[2] *at* in MS., corrected in later hand.

¶ To the Erl of Pauyk / whicħ that hadde tho
Wedded his Suster / preyed he specially
To bryngen hom a geyn / hise children two
In honurable estat / al openly
But oo thyng he hi*m* preyed / vtterly
That he to no wygħt / thoughħ men wolde enquere
714 Shulde nat telle / whos children that they were

¶ But seyn that the mayden / shulde wedded be
Vn to the Markys / of Saluce a noon
And as this Erl was preyed / so dide he
For at the day sette / he on his wey is gon
And forthħ he rod / ful fast a noon
Toward Saluce / this Mayde for to gyde
721 hire ȝonge brother / ridyng hire besyde

¶ Arrayed was / toward hire mariage
This fresshħ May / ful of gemmes clere
Hire brother whicħ / that Seuene ȝer was of age
Arayed eke ful fresshħ / in his manere
And thus in gret noblesse / and withħ glad chere
Toward Saluces / shapyng here Iourney
728 Fro day to day / they ryden in here wey ¶ Explicit quarta pars

¶ A mong al this / after his wykked vsage ¶ Incipit pars quinta:
This Markys / ȝet his wyf to tempte more
To the outrest preue / of hire corage
ffully / to haue / exp*e*rience and lore
If that she were / as stedefast as byfore
he on a day / in open audience
735 fful boistously / hathħ seid hire / this sentence

¶ Certes Grisilde / I had I now plesaunce
To haue ȝow to my wyf / for ȝoure goodnesse

As for ȝoure trouthe / and for ȝoure obeysaunce
Nought for ȝoure lynage / ne for ȝoure richesse
But now knowe I / in verray sothfastnesse
That in gret lordship / if I me wel auyse
742 There is gret seruitute / in sondry wyse

¶ I may not do / as eu*er*y plowman may
My peeple constreyneth me / to take
A nother wyf / and crien day be day
And eke the Pope / rancour / for to slake
Consenteth it / that dar I vndertake
And trewely / thus meche / I wyl ȝow sey
749 My newe wyf / is comyng by the wey

¶ Be strong of hert / and voide a noon hire place
And thilke dower / that ȝe broughten me
Take it a geyn / I gr*a*unt it of my grace
Returneth to ȝoure fadres hous / q*uo*d he
Noman may alwey / haue p*ro*sp*er*ite
With euen hert / I rede ȝow to endure
756 The stroke of fortune / or of auenture

¶ And she a geyn answered / in pacience
My lord q*uo*d she / I wot and wyst alwey
how that bytwene / ȝoure magnificence
And my pou*er*te / no wyght ne can ne may
Maken comp*a*r*i*son / it is no nay
I ne held me neu*er*e digne / in no manere
763 To be ȝoure wyf / ne ȝoure chaumbrere

¶ And in this hous / there ȝe me lady made
The heye god take I / for my wytnesse
And also wysly / he my soule glade
I neu*er*e held me lady / ne maistresse

But humble *ser*uaunt / to ȝoure worthynesse
And eu*ere* shal / while *þat* my lyf may dure
770 A bouen eu*ery* / worldly creature

¶ That ȝe so longe / of ȝoure benignite
han holden me / in honour and nobley
Where as I was / nought worthy for to be
That thanke I god / and ȝow / to whom I prey
ffor ȝelde it ȝow / there is nomore to sey
Vn to my fader / gladly wol I wende
777 And with hi*m* dwelle / vn to my lyues ende

¶ There I was fostered / of a child ful smal
Til I be dede / my lyf there wol I lede
A wydewe clene / in body hert and al
And sithe I ȝaf to ȝow / my maydenhede
And am ȝoure trewe wyf / it is no drede
God shilde / swich a lordes wyf / to take
784 A nother man / to husbonde or to make

¶ And of ȝoure newe wyf / god of his grace
So graunte ȝow welthe / and p*ros*p*er*ite
ffor I wol gladly / ȝelden hire my place
In which that I was / blisful wont to be
For sithe it liketh ȝow / my lord q*uo*d she
That whilom weren / al myn hertis rest
791 That I shal gon / I wyl go whan ȝow list

¶ But there as ye me p*ro*fre / swich doware
As I first brought / it is wel in my mynde
It were my wreched clothes / no thyng faire
The which to me / were hard now for to fynde
O goode god / how gentyl and how kynde

ȝe semed by ȝoure speche / and ȝoure vysage
798 The day / that maked was / oure mariage

¶ But sothē is seid / algate I fynde it trewe
For in effect / it preued is on me
loue is nought old / as whan that it is newe
But certes lord / for noon aduersitee
To deye in this cas / it shal nat be
That euere in word or werk / I shal repent
805 That I ȝow ȝaf myn hert / in hole entent

¶ My lord ȝe wet / that in my fadres place
ȝe dide me stripe / out of my poore wede
And richely me clad / of ȝoure grace
To ȝow brought I nat ellis / out of drede
But filthe and nakednesse / and maydenhede
And heere a geyn / my clothyng I restore
812 And eke my weddyng ryng / for eueremore

¶ The remenaunt of ȝoure Ioweles / redy be
Withē inne ȝoure chaumbre / I dar it safly seyn
Naked out of my fadres hous / quod she
I cam / and naked mot I turne a geyn
Al ȝoure plesaunce / wold I folwe feyn
But ȝet I hope / it be nat ȝoure entent
819 That I smokles / out of ȝoure paleys went

¶ ȝe coude nat do / so dishonest a thyng
That thilke wombe / in whicē ȝoure children ley
Shulde byforn̄ the peeple / in my walkyng
Be seyn al bare / wherfore I ȝow prey
late me nat lyke a worme / go by the wey
Remembre ȝow / myn owen lord so dere
826 I was ȝoure wyf / thoughē I vnworthy were

¶ Wherfore in guerdone / of my maydenhede
Whicħ that I brought / and nought a geyn I bere
As vouchesaf / to ȝeue me to my mede
But swicħ a smok / as I was wont to were
That I there witħ may wrye / the wombe of hire[1]
That was ȝoure wyf / and here I take my leue
833 Of ȝow myn owen lord / leste I ȝow greue

¶ The smok q*uo*d he / that þ*o*u hast on thy bak
lat it be stille / and bere it forthħ witħ the
But wel vnethes / thilke word he spak
But went his wey / for reuthe and for pite
Byforn̄ the folk / hire seluen stripetħ she
And in hire smok / witħ foot and hede al bare
840 Toward hire fadres hous / forth[2] is she fare

¶ The folk hire folwen / wepyng in here wey
And fortune ay / they cursen / as they gon
But she fro wepyng / kepetħ hire eyen drey
Ne in this tyme / word ne spak she noon
hire fader / that this tidyng / herd a noon
Cursed the day / and tyme / that nature
847 Shoþ hi*m* to ben / a lyues creature

¶ For out of doute / this olde poore man
Was eu*e*re in suspect / of hire mariage
For eu*e*re he demed / sithe that it bygan
That whan the lord / fufilled had his corage
hym wolde thynke / it were a disperage
To his estate / so lowe for to lighħt
854 And voyden hire / as sone as eu*e*re he myghħt

[1] Corrected from *heere* by the original scribe.
[2] Inserted above the line by the original scribe.

¶ A geyns his doughter / hastily goth he
For he by noyse of folk / knew hire comyng
And with hire olde cote / as it myght be
he couered hire / ful sorwefully wepyng
But oon hire body / myght he it nat bring
For rude was the clothe / and she more of age
861 Be dayes feele / than at hire mariage

¶ Thus with hire fader / for a certeyn space
Dwelleth this flour / of wyfly pacience
That neither by hire wordes / ne hire face
Byforn the folk / ne eke in here absence
Ne shewed she / that hire was don offence
Ne of hire heye estate / no remembraunce
868 Ne had she / as by hire countenaunce

¶ No wonder is / for in hire gret estate
hire goost was eu*ere* / in pleyn humylite
No tendre mouth / non hert delicate
No pompe / no semblaunt of ryalte
But ful of pacient benygnyte
Discrete / and prydles / ay hon*ur*able
875 And to hire husbond / ay meke and stable

¶ Men speken of Iob / and most for his humblesse
As clerkis whan he*m* list / konne wel endite
Namely of men / but as in sothfastnesse
Though Clerkis preyse wo*m*men / but a lite
There can noman / in humblesse hi*m* a quyte
Nota bene As women konne / ne konne be half so trewe
882 As wommen ben / but it be falle of newe

¶ Fro Boloigne / is this Erl of Pauyk come
Of which the fame / vp sprong / to more and lesse

And in the peeples Eres / alle and some
Was couth eke / that a newe markysesse
he wit̄ hi*m* brought / in swich̄ pompe & richesse:
That neu*er*e was there seyn / wit̄ ma*n*nes eye
889 So noble aray / in al West lumbardye

¶ The Markys / which̄ that shope / & knew al this
Er that this Erl was come / sent his message
For thilke sely / poore Grisildis
And she wit̄ humble hert / and glad visage
Nat wit̄ no swollen thought / in hire corage
Cam at his heste / and oon hir knees hire sette
896 And reuerently / and wysly she hi*m* grette

¶ Grisilde q*uod* he / my wyl is outerly
This mayden / that shal wedded be to me
Resceyued be to morwe / as ryally
As yt possible is / in myn hous to be
And eke that eu*er*y wyght / in his degree
haue his estate / in syttyng and in seruyse
903 And hey plesaunce / as I can best deuyse

¶ I haue no wo*m*man / sufficient certeyn
The chaumbres to araye / in ordinaunce
After my lust / and therfore wold I feyn
That thyn were / al swich̄ man*er* gou*er*naunce
Thow knowest eke / of olde al my plesaunce
Though̄ thyn a ray be badde / and euel be seye
910 Do thow thyn deuer / at the leste weye

¶ Nat oonly lord / that I am glad q*uo*d she
To do ȝoure lust / but I desire also
ȝow for to serue / and pleese in my degree
Wit̄ outen feyntyng / and shal eu*er*e moo

Ne neu*ere* for no wele / ne no woo
Ne shal the goost / with̄ Inne myn hert stynt
917 To loue ȝow best / with̄ al myn trewe entent

¶ And with̄ that word / she gan the hous to digh̄t
And tables for to sette / and beddes make
And peyned hire / to don al that she mygh̄t
Preying the chaumbreres / for goddis sake
To hasten hem / and faste swepe and shake
And she the most / seruysable of alle
924 hath̄ eu*er*y chaumbre arayed / and his halle

¶ A bouten the vnderne / gan this Erl a ligh̄t
That with̄ hi*m* brough̄t / theise noble children twey
ffor which̄ the peeple / ran to se the sigh̄t
Of here aray / so richely be sey
And tha*n*ne at arst / a monges hem they sey
That Walter was no fool / though̄ that hi*m* list
931 To chaunge his wyf / for it was for his best

¶ ffor she is feyrere / as they demen alle
Than is Grisilde / and more tendre of age
And fairere fruyt / bytwen he*m* shuld falle
And more plesaunt / for hīre heigh̄ lynage
hire brother eke / so fayr was of vysage
That hem to seen / the peeple hath̄ caugh̄t plesaunce
938 Commendyng now / the Markys gou*er*naunce

¶ O stormy peeple / vn sad / and eu*ere* vntrewe ¶ Auctor
Ay vndiscret / and chaungyng as a fane
Delityng eu*ere* / in rumbul that is newe
ffor lyke the Mone / ay waxeth̄ he and wane
Ay ful of clappyng / dere I now a Iane
ȝoure dome is fals / ȝoure constaunce euele preueth̄
945 A ful gret fool is he / that oon ȝow leueth̄

¶ Thus seiden sadde folk / in that Citee
Whan that the peeple / gased vp and doun
ffor they were glad / rig̃ht for the nouelte
To han a newe lady / of here touñ
No more of this / make I now mencioñ
But to Grisilde a geyn / I wol me dresse
952 And telle hire constaunce / and hire besynesse

¶ ffu̇l besy was Grisilde / in eu*er*y thyng
That to the fest / was p*er*tynent
Rig̃ht noug̃ht was she a bayst / of hire clothyng
Toug̃h it were rude / and somdele eke to rent
But wit̃h glad chere / to the ȝate is she went
Wit̃h othere folk / to grete the Markysesse
959 And after that / dot̃h fort̃h hire besynesse

¶ Wit̃h so glad chere / hise gestes she resceyued
And so konyngly / euerich̃ in his degree
That no defaute / noman p*er*ceyued
But ay they wondren / what she be
That in so poore aray / was for to se
And coude swich̃ hono*ur* / and reuerence
966 And worthily they preisen / hire prudence

¶ In all this mene while / she ne stynt
This Mayde / and eke hire brother / to comende
Wit̃h al hire herte / in ful benigne entent
So wel / that noman coude / hire pris amende
But at the last / whan that theise lordes wende
To setten he*m* doun to mete / he gan to calle
973 Grisilde / as she was besy / in the halle

¶ Grisilde q*uo*d he / as it were in his pley
how lyket̃h the my wyf / and hire beaute

Right wel q*uo*d she / my lord / for in good fey
A fairere saw I neu*er*e noon / than she
I preye to god / ȝeue hire p*ros*per*i*te
And so hope I / that he wyl to ȝow send
980 Plesaunce I now / vn to ȝoure lyues end

¶ O thyng byseke I ȝow / and warne also
That ȝe ne pryke / w*ith* no turmentynge
This tendre Mayde / as ȝe han don moo
ffor she is fostred / in hire norisshynge
More tenderly / and to my supposynge
She coude nat / adu*er*site endure
987 As coude a poore / fostred creature

Vnum bona fide precor ac moneo ne hanc illis aculeis agites quibus alteram agitasti namque & iunior & delicatius nutrita est / pati quantum ego vt reor non valeret :—

¶ And whan this Walt*er* / saugh hire pacience
hire glad chere / and no malice at al
And he so oft / had don to hire offence
And she ay sad / and constau*n*t as a wal
Contennyng eu*er*e / hire Innocence ou*er* al
This sturdy Markys / gan his hert dresse
994 To rewe vp oon hire wyfly / stedfastnesse

¶ This is I now / Grisilde myn q*uo*d he
Be now nomore a gast / ne euele apayd
I haue thy feith / and thyn benygnytee
As wel as eu*er*e womman / was assayed
In gret a stat / and poorely arrayed
Now knowe I deere wyf / thy stedfastnesse
1001 And hire in armes toke / and gan hire kysse

¶ And she for wonder / toke of it no kepe
She herde nat / what thyng he to hire seyde
She ferd as she had stirt / out of a slepe
Tyl she / out of hire Masednesse / a breyde

Grisilde q*uo*d he / by god that for vs deyde
Thow art my wyf / noon other I haue
1008 Ne neu*er*e had / as god my soule saue

¶ This is thy doughter / which ꝑou hast supposed
To be my wyf / that other feithfully
Shal be myn Eyr / as I haue ay disposed
Thow bar hi*m* / in thy body trewely
At Boloigne / haue I kept he*m* preuyly
Take he*m* a geyn / for now maist ꝑou nat sey
1015 That thow hast lorn / noone of ꝑine children twey

¶ And folk that other wyse / han seyd on me
I warne he*m* wele / that I haue don this dede
ffor no malice / ne for no cruelte
But for to assaye / in the / thy wommanhede
And nat to slen myne children / god forbede
But for to kepen he*m* / preuyly and stille
1022 Til I thy purpos knew / and al thy wylle

¶ Whan she this herd / on swouȝne doun she falleth
For pytous ioye / and aftir hire swownyng
She / bothe hire ȝonge children / vn to hire calleth
And in hire armes / pytously wepyng
Embracede hem / and tenderly kyssing
fful lyke a Moder / with her salte teres
1029 She bathed bothe here visage / and here heres

¶ O which a pytous thyng / it was to se
hire swownyng / and hire humble voys to heere
Graunt m*er*cy lord / god thanke it ȝow q*uo*d she
That ȝe han saued me / myne children dere
Now rekke I neu*er*e / to be ded right heere
Sithe I stonde / in ȝoure loue / and in ȝoure grace
1036 No force of deth / ne whan my spirit pace

¶ O tendre o dere / o ȝonge children myne
ȝoure wooful Moder / wend stedfastly
That cruel houndes / or som foule venyme
had eten ȝow / but god of his m*er*cy
And ȝoure benigne fader / tenderly
hath don ȝow kepe / and in that same stounde
1043 Al sodeynly / she fel a doun to grounde

¶ And in hire swough / so sadly holdeth she
hire children two / whan she gan he*m* embrace
That with gret sleight / and gret difficulte
The children / from hire arm / they gonne race
O many a teere / many a pytous pace
Doun ran of hem / that stoden hire beside
1050 Vnethe a boute hire / myght they a byde

¶ Walter hire gladeth / and hire sorwe slaketh
Sche ryseth vp / a basshed / from hire traunce
And eu*er*y wyght / hire ioye / and feste maketh
Til she hath caught / a geyn / hire countenaunce
Walt*er* hire doth / so feithiful plesaunce
That it was deynte / for to se the chere
1057 Bytwen he*m* two / syn they ben met in fere

¶ Theise ladyes / whan that they / here tyme sey
han taken hire / and in to chaumbre gon
And stripen hire / out of hire rude aray
And in a cloth of gold / that bright shon
With a Corone / of many a riche ston
Vp on hire hede / they in to halle hire brought
1064 And there she was honoured / as hire ought

¶ Thus hath this pytous day / a blisful ende
ffor eu*er*y man & wo*m*man doth his myght

This day / in myrthe and reuel / to spende
Til on the walkene / shon the sterres lighť
ffor more solempne / in eu*er*y ma*n*nes sighť
This feste was / and grettere of costage
1071 Than was the reuel / of hire mariage

¶ fful many a ȝere / in heighť prosperitee
lyuen theise two / in concord and in reest
And richely his doughťer / maryed he
Vn to a lord / oon of the worthiest
Of al Itayle / and thanne in pees and rest
his wyues fader / in his court he kepeťh
1078 Til that the soule / out of his body crepeťh

¶ his sone succedith / in his heritage
In reste and pees / after his faderes day
And fortunat was eke / in mariage
Al put he nat his wyf / in gret assay
This world is nat so strong / it is no nay
As it hath ben / in olde tymes ȝore
1085 And herkeneth / what this Auctor / seith therfore

¶ This storie is seid / nat for that wyues shulde
ffolwe Grisilde / as in humilitee
ffor it were importable / though they wold
But for that eu*er*y wyght / in his degree
Shulde be constaunt / in aduersitee
As was Grisilde / therfore Petrak wrytetth
1092 This storie / which with heye stile / he endyteth

¶ ffor sithe a womman / was so pacient
Vn to a mortal man / wel more we [1] ought
Resceyuen al in gree / that god vs sent

[1] Added above the line by the original scribe.

Hanc Historiam stilo nunc alto retexere
visum fuit non tam[1] ideo vt matronas
nostri tempo*r*is ad imitandam
huius vxoris pacienciam que mihi inimita-
bilis videtur quam vt legentes ad imi-
tandam saltem femine constanciam excitarentur
vt quod hec viro suo prestitit / hoc prestare

[1] *tum* in MS.

ffor gret skyl is / he preeue that he wrought
But he ne temptetħ noman / that he bought
As seith Seynt Jame / if ȝe his pistel rede
1099 he preeuetħ folk al day / it is no drede

deo nostro audeant qui licet[1] vt Iacobus
sit Apostolus / Intemptator sit malorum
& ipse neminem temptat / probat tamen &
sepe nos multis ac grauibus flagellis

¶ And suffretħ vs / as for oure exercise
Witħ sharpe skorges / and aduersitee
fful oft to be bete / in sondry wyse
Nat for to knowe / oure wyl for certis he
Er we were borñ / knew al oure freeletee
And for oure best / is al his gouernaunce
1106 lat vs thanne lyue / in vertuous suffraunce

exerceri sinit nos vt animum
nostrum sciat quem sciuit antequam crea-
remur & c' :

¶ But oo word lordynggis / herkenetħ or I go
It were ful hard / to fynde now a dayes
In al a Toun / Grisildis thre or twoo
ffor if þat thay were put / to swichħ assayes
The gold of hem / hatħ now so bad a layes
Witħ bras / that thoughħ the coyne / be fair at eye
1113 It wolde rather breste a two / than plye

¶ ffor whichħ here / for the wyues loue of Bathe
Whos lyf / and al hire secte / God mayntene
In heighħ maistrie / and elles were it skathe
I wol witħ lusty hert / fresshħ and grene
Seyn ȝow a song / to glade ȝow I wene
And late vs stynt / of ernestful matere
1120 Herkenetħ my song / that seitħ in this manere

GRisilde is ded / and eke hire pacience
And bothe at ones / I beried in Itaylle
ffor whichħ I crie / in open audience
No wedded man / so hardy be / to assaylle
his wyues pacience / in trost to fynde
1126 Grisildis / for in certeyn he shal fayle

[1] *audeat quilibet* in MS.

Auctor ¶ O noble wyues / ful of heigh̄ prudence
lat noon humilite / ȝoure tonges nayle
Ne late no Clerk / haue cause or diligence
To wryte of ȝow / a storie of swich̄ meruaille
As of Grisilde / pacient and kynde
1132 lest Chechiuache / ȝow swelwe / in hire entraille

¶ ffolweth̄ Ekko / that holdeth̄ noon silence
But euere answereth̄ / at the counter taille
Beth̄ nat be daffed / for ȝoure Innocence
But sharply taketh̄ on ȝow / the gouernaille
Emprenteth̄ wel / this lesson / in ȝoure mynde
1138 ffor comune profyt / sithe it may a vaille

¶ ȝe Archewyues / stondeth̄ ay at defence
Syn ȝe ben stronge / as is a gret Camaille
Ne suffreth̄ nat / that men ȝow do offence
And sklendre wyues / feble as in bataille
Beth̄ egre / as a Tygre is be ȝonde in Inde
1144 Ay clappeth̄ as a Mille / I ȝow counsaille

¶ Ne drede hem nat / doth̄ hem no reuerence
For though̄ thyn husbonde / armed be in maille
The arwes of thyn crabbed / eloquence
Shal perse his brest / and eke his auentaille
In ielousye / I rede eke thow him bynde
1150 And þou shalt make him couche / as doth̄ a quaille

¶ If thow be fair / there folk ben in presence
Shewe thow thy vysage / and thyn apparaille
If thow be foule / be free of thyn dispence
To gete the frendes / ay do thyn trauaille
Be ay of chere as light̄ / as lef on lynde
1156 And late him care / wepe / wrynge / and waille

¶ This worthy Clerk / whan ended was his tale
Oure host seyde / and swor by goddes bones
Me were leuere / than a Barel of ale
My wyf at hom / had herd this legend ones
This is a gentil tale / for the nones
As to my purpos / wyst ȝe my wylle
1163 But thyng that wol nat be / lat it be stille

¶ Sic desinit fabula Cl*er*ici / & incipit p*ro*logus of the Marchau*n*t.

I have endeavoured in printing this tale to represent the Manuscript as nearly as type will allow. The italics indicate the letters which are not expressed in the abbreviations.

W. A. W.

Trinity College, Cambridge,
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